

THE
BELIEVER'S
LIFE

Its Past
Present and Future
Tenses

AT. PIERSON, D.D.

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THE BELIEVER'S LIFE

ITS PAST, PRESENT, AND
FUTURE TENSES

BY
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Introductory

THE only justification for making a new book, in these days of superabundant reading matter, must be that it has some mission.

This unpretending little book is given to the public with some hesitation, from the obvious incompleteness of its treatment of so vast a theme as "The Past, Present, and Future of the Believer." But in this case the judgment of spiritual counsellors has been accepted, that even so brief, partial, and cursory a glance at the grand subject may serve to comfort and confirm believers on the one hand, and to stimulate further study and research into the wonders of Grace, on the other.

The "Mildmay Conference" of 1905 will always be memorable, from the fact that, during three days, *The Tenses of the Believer's Life* were under devout consideration. It fell to the writer,

by no choice of his own, to lead off in the discussion, on the first and second mornings, and to take a leading part in the closing meeting of the third evening. This is probably the reason why these addresses were chosen, in preference to others, as appropriate for a printed and permanent form, inasmuch as they alone touched upon all the grand divisions of the threefold topic.

As, however, the time practicable for each address allowed of only a partial and fragmentary treatment, it has been deemed advisable, in giving them this form, to expand them, sufficiently enlarging upon the oral utterance to embrace some departments of the general theme, whose omission, however necessary at the time of the discussion, would be a serious defect in the printed form. Yet, in such expansion, no attempt has been made to cover the whole ground, even by way of outline, and care has been taken not to destroy the identity between the original addresses and the printed page.

It may not be amiss, however, first to put before the reader the whole scheme of treatment, as suggested to the various speakers for their guidance, and as serving to convey some con-

ception of how much is included in *The Tenses of the Believer's Life*. In the following pages, in the *Past* Tense is included the entire history and experience of the Sinner, previous to the act of saving faith, and up to the moment of his becoming a believer; in the *Present* Tense is embraced all his experience as a believer from the time of his acceptance of Christ to his departure from this life, or his translation at the Coming of the Lord; and in the *Future* Tense is comprehended all that lies beyond Death or the Coming of the Lord, in the Eternal State. These defining lines serve to limit the present treatment of the theme.

The Wider Outline

The following is the wider outline that takes in that more extended horizon of the whole subject—impracticable for these pages.

I. THE PAST TENSE.

1. MAN'S RUIN—SIN.

2. GOD'S REDEMPTION—SALVATION.

1. MAN'S RUIN—

- (a) His Fall in Adam—Generic (1. Cor. xv. 22 ; Rom. v. 12)—
Immediate Effects—Remote Consequences—Heredity.
- (b) Fall of each Sinner—Specific, Individual, Voluntary
(1 Kings viii. 46)—Results : Guilt, Condemnation, Power,
Slavery—Penalty : Downward Tendency, Satanic Control.

2. GOD'S REDEMPTION—

- (a) The Plan—Sovereignty of Grace—“Chosen,” “Predestinated,” in Love (Eph. i. 4, 5).
- (b) Execution of the Plan, in Christ—Logos—“Word Incarnate”—Second Man and Last Adam—Life among Men—Example, Words, Works—Death, in behalf of Men—Resurrection—Ascension—Session—Christ's Work, Basis of unlimited Offer of Salvation.
- (c) Application, by Holy Ghost—Inspired Scripture, as His Expression—Pentecostal Outpouring—Person, Office, and Work of Spirit.

II. THE PRESENT TENSE.

1. IN CHRIST.

3. IN THE WORLD.

2. IN THE CHURCH.

4. IN THE FLESH.

1. IN CHRIST—

(a) Entrance into Christ, by Repentance and Faith—Reconciliation—Regeneration—Adoption or Sonship.

(b) Abiding in Christ — Present Salvation — Justification—Eternal Life—Christ the Sphere of Believer's Life—Prayer—Sanctification — Preservation — Victory—Whole Armour of God.

(c) Practical Reception of Holy Spirit—Witness—Enduement—Prayer — Transformation of Temper — Love — Service—Power.

2. IN THE CHURCH—

Confession—Place of Ordinances—Baptism—Lord's Supper—Worship—Work—Training — Fellowship—God's Idea of, and Purpose in, the Church — Missions at Home and Abroad.

3. IN THE WORLD—

Define "World"—Relations to World—Attitude to World—Temptations of World—Peculiar Perils—Satan, God of this World.

4. IN THE FLESH—

Define "Flesh"—Carnal Nature — Lusts — Self Life — War between Flesh and Spirit — Satanic Assaults — Whole Armour of God.

III. THE FUTURE TENSE.

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|----------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. THE INTERMEDIATE STATE. | 3. THE MILLENNIAL AGE. |
| 2. OUR LORD'S RETURN. | 4. THE END. |

1. THE INTERMEDIATE STATE—

Between Death and Second Coming—From First to Second Coming—An Evil Age—Nature and Mission of Church—The Divine Purpose in this Age—Its Perils—Development of Heresy and Iniquity—Alliance of Church and World—Apostasy—Conflict with Evil—Antichrist—Death of Believers—Interval from Death to Second Advent.

2. OUR LORD'S RETURN—

The Coming of Christ—Personal, Visible, Premillennial—The First Resurrection—The Judgment-seat of Christ, and Awards of Kingdom.

3. THE MILLENNIAL AGE—

Reign of Saints—Glory—Full Redemption—Body, Soul, and Spirit—Heaven—Reunion of Saints—New Jerusalem—New Creation—Final Judgment—Great White Throne.

4. THE END—

Close Mediatorial Reign—Delivering up Kingdom—"God All in All."

THE BELIEVER'S LIFE

PART I

THE PAST TENSE

“Who were dead in trespasses and sins ; wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world. . . .

“But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins.”—*Eph. ii. 1-5.*

THE BELIEVER'S LIFE

THE PAST TENSE

“In Time Past”

THE devout study of the scheme of Redemption has brought believers, in all ages, to two great conclusions—(1) the unspeakable sinfulness of man, and (2) the unutterable grace of God. “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?”—that is the one side. “How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!”—that is the other side. These contributions to theological science are like the two mites which the widow cast into the treasury, which were “all she had, even all her living.”

Looking at the *past*, it suggests, first, *man's condition*, and secondly, *God's provision*; the latter including the *preparation* for, and the *application* of, Redemption.

As in a critical case of illness and recovery, three things naturally claim attention—(1) the malignant character of the disease of Sin; (2) the discovery of the remedy in Salvation; and (3) the way in which man's disease and the remedy are practically brought together in the wisdom and grace of God. Some matters should have special mention, either because some misconception prevails regarding them, or because they need special emphasis.

I. MAN'S PAST CONDITION.

This is divinely described as one in which he was "*dead in sins.*" What does 'dead in sins' mean? Death is associated mainly with two things, both incident to the departure or decay of vitality: the first, utter *incapacity for motion*; and the second, utter *insensibility to impression*. The dead man is unable to move, or even to feel. *Spiritual* death likewise involves inability to walk with God, and insensibility even to His love. The sinner is incapable of doing what is right, and insensible alike to the threatenings and invitations, the justice and the grace of God.

But this does not forfeit *responsibility*, for the inability and insensibility are *moral* in character. There lies, beneath them, moral estrangement, hostility, enmity. Human systems of teaching often fail to give proper emphasis and proper prominence to this truth. Rom. viii. 6, 7 gives the key to the whole situation: "For to be carnally minded is death"—not is fatal, or brings death, but *is* death—"but to be spiritually minded is *life* and peace, because the carnal mind (not is hostile, but) is *enmity* against God." Such 'death' implies, not forfeits, responsibility. If to be carnally minded is death, and to be carnally minded is also enmity, death is enmity, and enmity is death. A dead *man* cannot hate or rebel, but a *dead sinner can*. It is vain, therefore, to deny responsibility; the difficulty lies in the 'carnal mind,' which is enmity as well as death.

A flood of light is thrown on this subject when we notice that these two words are thus both equivalents for 'the carnal mind,' "which is *not subject* to the law of God, neither indeed can be"; that is, it constitutes the very essence of *lawlessness*, so that "they that are in the flesh cannot please God."

Hence come some moral paradoxes and their reconciliation. We read that God hardened Pharaoh's heart; and that Pharaoh hardened his heart. Both statements are true: it was hardened by God's act and by his own. In many like passages of Scripture God's *judicial act* stands over-against man's *voluntary act*. "Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: for this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and *their eyes have they closed*" (Acts xxviii. 26, 27). Here, again, is God judicially inflicting blindness; and, on the other hand, men closing their own eyes. These two aspects of one awful truth are never far separated in the Word of God, often found side by side through the entire Book.

As to the *origin of evil*, we know very little about it. It is a great mystery. There is, however, doubt whether liability to sin is not a necessary complement and condition of independence, intelligence, and free agency; it may be a necessary requisite of a voluntary moral being that his will shall be left at liberty to choose the right or the wrong. Certain it is that, of all created beings of which

we have knowledge, some have not kept their first estate of obedience and innocence, which at least shows that they were created free agents. We have to do with *facts* rather than philosophy, and the awful fact is universal sin—enmity to God in the carnal heart, insensibility to His love. While we stumble at such mysteries as the Trinity, there is in the nature and being of God no enigma greater than is found in the carnal heart of man—how a sinner, with death before him, with a full and free offer of salvation needing only to be accepted, will so persist in going on in a course of iniquity, that even the grace of God, instead of softening, only hardens him; how not only threatenings but invitations repel; and how sin goes on deepening in guilt and degradation, from one step of temptation, defeat, and disaster to another, until there is already a foretaste of hell in the present life—this is an inscrutable moral mystery. These are, however, awful facts, which soon come to be real in the actual career of the sinner; and with such facts we have to deal. The fact of sin being conceded, the question is how to *get rid of it*, whether or not we know how to account for it.

A double problem presented itself before

Omniscience and Love, with regard to humanity. We are told (Eph. ii. 2-6), "Ye were dead in trespasses and sins"; and it is added, "in time past ye *walked* in them"—walking represents a *voluntary motion*; and further on, "ye were *by nature* the children of wrath, even as others."

1. There is then both an *actuality of sin*, and a certain *heredity of evil*. We are born with a corrupt nature and tendencies; and as we develop in life, this innate disposition to elevate the sinful and selfish will above the holy and blessed will of God manifests itself in action.

2. Then there is the *actuality of sin*. We sin, choose to sin—we walk in evil ways. The first part of the problem of Redemption was what to do with actual sins, and the second was what to do with the inheritance of a sinful nature. In one conspicuous place this double problem is definitely treated—the fifth chapter of Romans.

For instance (Rom. v. 14), "Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses"—that is, from the Creation to the giving of the Law—"even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression." Notice here—(1) That death, the penalty for sin, reigned over multitudes

that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression. (2) That Adam is the figure of the Coming One. What has that typical relation to the coming Christ to do with this fact that death reigned even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression?

Look at an infant child. A few weeks or months or years pass. That child has not as yet performed any conscious responsible act. But disease and death seize upon it. It has not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, *i.e.* voluntarily, yet it suffers and dies. Death reigns over the child—the same penalty as over the actual sinner, even though there has been no voluntary sin.

We all feel that God in justice and love could not let such a child go to hell; yet how can that infant child go to heaven, with a sinful, corrupt nature, which would equally repel God, and be repelled by Him! Adam was the figure of the Coming One, in this respect, that, as death reigned upon thousands who had not sinned after the similitude of his transgression, so life reigns over thousands who have not believed after the similitude of his faith. If this be a true inference, then the work of the Lord Jesus Christ absolutely

embraces every child of Adam so far as only the guilt and inheritance of Adam's transgression is concerned. But when voluntary sin has been committed by a child of Adam, voluntary faith must enter into Salvation. In so far, then, as all died only in Adam, all are made alive in Christ; but in so far as any human being sins for himself, he must believe for himself.

This part of Christ's redeeming work is of great value, for millions who died before moral accountability are to-day in the presence of God, because Christ died for them, and by His blood cleansed their sinful nature.

This great problem our Lord God solved in infinite wisdom and love, by appointing One, the Second Man, the Last Adam, to be like Adam the Representative Head of the whole race. So He is the Propitiation not for our sins only, but *for the whole world*, though not in the same sense that He is the Propitiation for *our* sins. How wonderful that God should thus have made provision for that generic fall of the whole race in Adam, by the atoning work of Christ; and then for the specific fall of each voluntary transgressor, by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Never complain of the Law of Heredity, notwithstanding that by it you inherit a fallen nature from Adam, as though that were all that you inherit.

Combe, though himself an infidel, vindicates the law of heredity in his book on *The Constitution of Man*. He says, in substance, that no man has reason to complain against nature's organic law, because it was designed as a channel for good, though human perversity has turned into it a current of evil.

God made the organic law of connection between parent and child for transmission of blessing: man's sin made it to convey cursing. While we inherit tendencies to evil, a thousand good results also come to us through the same channel. Whatever excellence or virtue is in the father, transmits at least higher aptitudes to the son. To annul the Law of Heredity would therefore prevent all beneficent as well as disastrous influences of parent upon offspring. We have no cause to complain of God's Law of Heredity; nor that, in accordance therewith, the family rather than the individual is, both in good and evil results, the unit in Scripture.

II. GOD'S PROVISION.

Turn now to *God's provision* for man's sinful and lost condition. "By grace ye are saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God." God made provision not only for *sins*, but for *sin*. Reflect a moment upon the doctrine of Justification (Rom. iii. 9-31). This grand passage of Scripture is the only one in which the whole truth is presented, and a wonderful disclosure it is. Paul shows that (1) condemnation is universal, over both Jew and Gentile, so that there is no hope of self-justification, for how can any condemned transgressor justify himself? Then he shows (2) that by the Law can no flesh be justified, for Law only brings the consciousness of transgression. (3) Further (ver. 21), that there is revealed a righteousness apart from the Law; (4) (ver. 22) that this righteousness is by faith in Jesus Christ—offered to all and actually put on, as a garment, by all believers; (5) (ver. 24) that Justification is presented as *free*—all of His grace, through the Redemption which is in Christ Jesus; (6) (ver. 25) that it is through the Blood, the basis of

propitiation, which includes the remission of sins that are past through the forbearance of God. (7) Last of all, that this Justification does not complicate or implicate God with evil. He remains righteous, while imparting righteousness to the believer. Is not that a wonderful plan of salvation?

The substitution of an innocent Victim for the sinner is the basis of Justification by Faith. Some say, "Let us hear no more of the blood!" But if you take away the blood, you take away the foundation of all else. The crimson of man's sin and the crimson of atoning blood colour and characterise every page of the Bible.

One subject we cannot avoid here, though it is very difficult, perplexing, and mysterious—the subject of *Election*. "For by grace are ye saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God." "According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world. . . . Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children" (Eph. i. 4, 5).

No doubt Election is taught in Scripture. Three words are used in Ephesians—"chosen," "predestinated," "before-ordained." Chosen refers to

the eternal past; Predestination to the eternal future, looking to the final destiny; Foreordination links these together, and shows the co-ordination of God's will and man's will in the actual process of Redemption. God's plan for my life, and the life as actually lived, exactly match each other (chap. ii. 10). The danger is of perverting Election into *Fatalism*, which destroys the freedom of man's choice; and, with that, man's accountability and responsibility.

We should deal carefully with anything taught in the Word of God, accepting the mystery where it is inexplicable. "The secret things belong unto the Lord our God." It would be remarkable if, in this Book, there were no thoughts above our own.

This doctrine of Election is rather for the *believer* than for the unbeliever, and what was a stumbling-stone to the latter often becomes a stepping-stone to the former. Election, taught in the Word, must be consistent both with the sovereign will of God and the freedom of man; and if we cannot reconcile these two, it is because the subject is so infinitely lifted up above us.

Man is free. There are in your heart and mine seven thunders that utter their voices, such as

"I am," "I think," "I reason," "I love," "I judge," "I choose," "I act." And all these voices unite in affirming "I am responsible." Moreover, God Himself directly appeals to choice: He says, "*Why will ye die?*" (Ezek. xviii. 31).

As the Apocalypse closes, we read: "*Whosoever will*, let him take the water of life freely." Thus the last great invitation in God's Book is an appeal to the *will*. But—most startling of all—in Christ's lament over Jerusalem: "How often *would I* have gathered thy children, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and *ye would not*." The yearning of God and the stubborn refusal of man are here put in clear antagonism.

Often, in the same Scripture, both sides are presented. In John iii. 1-10, it would seem that man has nothing to do but wait for regeneration. But, in the latter half of that chapter, just as much emphasis is laid on the will of man as previously on the sovereign act of God.

Luke xv. contains one Parable in three parts. The first represents the Shepherd seeking the lost sheep "until He find it"—and then He carries it back.

Again, the woman searches till she finds her lost

piece of silver, which does nothing but lie there till found and restored to its place on her necklace.

Thus far one might judge that all man has to do is passively to wait for God to come after him. But in the latter part of the parable we have the complementary truth, and from this part, if alone, it might be inferred that the sinner has everything to do, and God nothing; but, putting the two together, we get the whole truth. "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God which worketh in you, both to will and to do." So far from God's working being a reason for *not* working, it is the very opposite. We are to work out, because God works in.

The experience of saints vindicates the doctrine of Election. Saul of Tarsus came to a knowledge of God only when met in the way by the risen Lord Jesus when driving forward in a mad career of persecution: what wonder he exalts electing grace, for where would he have been but for that grace! Tens of thousands of sinners evidently come to a knowledge of God only by the sovereign grace that seeks them out, and saves them. Most remarkable, in the history of missions, is the way in which God manifests His electing grace, in

choosing, equipping, and sending forth chosen workers.

As to the *practical* aspect of Election, a distinguished preacher has appropriately said, that from a practical point of view "the elect are whosoever will, and the non-elect are whosoever won't."

Dr. Hodge used to say to his students: "All of us Calvinists when we *preach*, preach like Arminians, for we urge men to choose Christ; but when even Arminians *pray*, they pray like Calvinists, for they dwell on the wonders of the grace that bought and sought them."

The truths of Redemption reach their climax in the lofty summits of *Justification* and *Predestination*. We imagine many a believer in perplexity over them, and appreciate such perplexities, having been harassed by them ourselves. Such doctrines being among the high things of God, it is equally hard to bring them *down* to the level of men, or to bring men *up* to their level. They remind us of the Domes of the Yosemite: if a few daring adventurers scale their precipitous sides, most of us can only look up, with awe, at their sublime loftiness.

Yet there may be a practical *side*, from which the ascent is gradual and easy; and from which

these grand doctrines are seen to be but corresponding halves of one greater original truth, as those Domes themselves appear to have been once united, but cleft asunder.

In hope to help, at least, to make these mysterious teachings both apprehensible and useful, we venture to take these truths as doctrines which may be put in simpler forms.

These present examples of the two main forms of difficulty which face us in Bible study: first, what it is *hard for the mind to grasp*; and secondly, what it is *hard for the natural heart to receive*. Of the first, Justification is an example; of the second, Predestination. To understand our acceptance with God on the basis of an imputed righteousness is not easy, because of the narrow limits of the *mind*; but to reconcile God's electing decrees with human freedom of choice and action, is to confront not only the feebleness of the understanding, but the pride and perverseness of the *heart*.

How, then, shall we evade the difficulty without avoiding the doctrines?

We may use *simpler forms of words*. "Justification" and "Predestination" may do for

Church Catechisms and theological treatises ; but, for the average believer, the more familiar household words are needed, that they may not first of all stumble over technical terms. In the *Gospels*, in the discourses of our Saviour, we look in vain for such words as Justification, Sanctification, Predestination, Election. They are reserved for the *Epistles*, because the words of Jesus were meant to be our model for teaching children ; for feeding babes that, having no teeth to chew with, need the pure *milk* of the Word, that does not demand mastication ; while the *Epistles* were for maturer believers, who have their cutters and grinders, and have both need of, and power to digest, strong *meat*.

We may also *substitute things for names*. In the *Gospels* are found all the truths found in the *Epistles* ; but in the *germ* only. Christ taught all these mysterious sublime doctrines, *not by names, but by things !* Instead of talking of ‘justification through imputed righteousness,’ He told the *Parable of the Prodigal Son*, who renounced a father’s love and care, went from home, spent all, wasting his substance in the worst sins, and came home with nothing left but rags and

wretchedness; and yet, on that poor beggar, the father's love and grace put a *robe*, *shoes*, and *even a ring*. Any *child* can understand *that*; and yet here is *imputed righteousness* in the *robe*, the alacrity of holy obedience in the *shoes*, and the adoption of a son and heir in the *ring*! (Compare the Parable of the Wedding Garment.) So, while Jesus never spoke of 'election' or 'predestination,' He gives us the Parable of the *Sheepfold*, of which He is the *Door*, and of the *flock*, of which He is the *Shepherd*; and, because one of these does not put the whole truth before us, He gives us the two half-truths joined in one double parable (John x.). How exquisitely does the doctrine of electing grace wind about the mind and heart, all unconsciously, as we study this double parable! How do I get to heaven? Not through any door I make for myself; not by climbing into it over the wall by my good works, but *through Him, the Door*. All I have to do is to *go in through an open way made for me*. If that is not Election, what is? But this needs to be put more fully and forcefully. And so Jesus gives us a supplementary or complementary parable. "I am the good

Shepherd." Then He expands the thought: As the good Shepherd, He *gives His life* for the sheep. He *goes* before them, *calls them by name*, *leads them* out and in; and so their safety is owing to His power and love, and all their movements are only because of *His voice*, which they follow! Here is predestination, vicarious sacrifice, prevenient grace, effectual calling, and holy obedience, and all *traced back* to one source—the Redeemer's love for us, which first awakened and constantly nourishes our love for Him!

This is teaching not by *names*, but by *things*, a method always most successful with children. Here lies the power of object lessons, blackboard lessons, visible forms of illustration. We turn the ears into eyes, and the eyes into ears. We make a double impression by sight and by sound. Instead of taxing immature intellectual faculties by abstruse mysteries, we do not even make any heavy draught on the imagination; the form of presentation is so familiar, so vivid, that it becomes almost *visible*; and so it was that our Lord, teaching not by names but by things, "revealed these things even unto babes!"

The *substance of these grand truths must be got hold of* by every believer before he can give them simple, practical form for others. Let him, like the cattle which chew the cud in order to give milk, master the doctrine, that he may know how to present the thing without the name.

Justification means "making just." It is a legal term, and refers to man's position before the law of God. He is not only a sinner, and so under condemnation; but has a *sinful nature*, which prompts him continually to new acts of sin, so that the more *law* he has the more *light* he has, and so the greater sin. As every man has sinned and come short of duty, the law has its grip upon him; and even if he could henceforth perfectly obey, there is need of something to bridge over his past sin. On any ground, therefore, there must be an atonement. If he comes before the law at all, without bearing its curse, some one else must bear his guilt, and he himself must bear before the law a merit not his own. He is bankrupt; another must pay his debt. He is naked; another must clothe him. He is a felon; another must be his surety. *This is Justification*—standing before God with my debt paid, my nakedness clothed,

and my guilt borne by another. Man's gospel is, "*Do!*" God's gospel is, "*Done!*" Boasting is excluded. I have only to believe; this is my only *work*, the work of *faith*, which is my bond of union with the Justifier—to take Jesus as Saviour, to put on Christ, to accept the white robe of His perfect righteousness, which is "unto all and upon all that believe."

Election is practically this: My salvation is due, first of all, to *God's choice of me, not to my choice of God*. I do, indeed, choose Him, but because He first chose me. My love, my coming to Him, my yearning toward Him, are all to be traced to His love, His coming to me, His yearning toward me. Otherwise, salvation would hang on man and not on God, and would imply a merit on man's part that would dispute the claims of grace.

The consistent view presented in the Word of God, throughout, is this: God has a plan, born in His own heart, borne out by His own providence and grace. And in our salvation, all from first to last is to be traced to Him. This plan is perfect and all-embracing. It takes in my repentance, faith, justification, sanctification, glorification. He begins the work *without* my knowledge and

co-operation ; He carries it on *with* my knowledge and co-operation. I come to see His plan, to recognise its perfect beauty and benevolence ; I, by faith, *come into that plan*, as a planet wheels into its predestined orbit ; and begin in holy obedience to revolve about God, held in my place by the centripetal force of His grace and love, that alone could prevent the centrifugal force of my old sinful nature from making me again a wandering star.

When once brought within that plan by my own consent, all things work together for my good. There can be no confusion or collision with any other interest, for every other being has his orbit also, and it cannot cross mine. Even eccentric orbits only appear so, because the universal plan is not, from our limited point of view, clearly apprehended by us. Every part of the work done *in* me is linked to every other, and all are but parts of a work done *for* me by my Redeemer. As Leighton says : “Effectual calling is inseparably tied to this eternal foreknowledge or election on the one side, and to salvation on the other ; these two links of the chain are up in heaven, in God’s own hand ; but this middle one is

let down to earth into the hearts of His children, and they, laying hold of it, have sure hold on the other two, for no power can sever them."

Both predestination and justification are thus the *two branches* from *one grand stock*—God's eternal plan of grace. In the work of our salvation, the first thought and the whole plan were His; His the first drawing, the first approach, the first calling; His the first loving, yearning, seeking: before I was even the *subject*, I was the *object* of divine grace. And before God made these first advances to me, He *meant* to; and as there was no *new thought or intent* in the unchangeable God, that previous purpose was an *eternal* one. So that, to admit, as all true disciples do, that justification is all of grace, and that God, in the whole work of saving souls, makes *the first approach, is to be compelled logically* to admit that from all eternity *He purposed* such gracious and unmerited advances to the sinner—which is *Election*!

In fact, true disciples, when they forget sectarian lines, often find themselves holding to, and standing on, common ground. Of this let the familiar story of Wesley and Simeon be our simple illustration in closing this part of our theme.

AN ARMINIAN AND A CALVINIST MAY AGREE.

The following conversation between Mr. Wesley and Mr. Simeon is related by Dr. Dealtry in his sermon on the occasion of the death of the latter :

“ Pray, sir, do you feel yourself a depraved creature, so depraved that you would never have thought of turning to God, if God had not first put it into your heart ? ”

“ Yes,” said the veteran Wesley, “ I do indeed.”

“ And do you utterly despair of recommending yourself to God by anything that you can do, and look for salvation solely through the blood and righteousness of Christ ? ”

“ Yes, solely through Christ.”

“ But, sir, supposing you were first saved by Christ, are you not somehow or other to save yourself afterwards by your own works ? ”

“ No ; I must be saved by Christ from first to last.”

“ Allowing, then, that you were first turned by the grace of God, are you not in some way or other to keep yourself by your own power ? ”

“ No.”

“What, then, are you to be upheld every hour and every moment by God, as much as an infant in its mother’s arms?”

“Yes, altogether.”

“And is all your hope in the grace and mercy of God to preserve you unto His heavenly kingdom?”

“Yes, I have no hope but in Him.”

“Then, sir, with your leave I will put up my dagger again ; *for this is all my Calvinism ; this is my election, my justification by faith, my final perseverance ; it is, in substance, all that I hold, and as I hold it.*”

THE WORKING OUT OF THE PLAN OF REDEMPTION.

The application of the plan of redemption is as wonderful, in its way, as the plan itself ; and corresponds to the compounding and applying of the remedies as discovered and prescribed by the physician. Much study and experience must precede such actual *application* of a sovereign remedy to the critical case of the patient. And, somewhat so, after God had from

Eternity formed in His own mind the perfect *plan* of human salvation and Redemption, this plan had to be put into practical operation, and brought to practical maturity in actual history. Several important elements or particulars are embraced in this process :—

I. First, THE GREAT MESSIANIC PROMISE (Gen. iii. 15), the substance of which was that there should be born, of the *woman*, a SEED that should come into conflict with the serpent, and destroy him by a crushing blow upon his head, while, at the same time, he was permitted to wound the heel of his Victor. This initial promise, which finds indefinite expansion in subsequent Messianic prophecy, was the great primary prophecy and promise of a saving Mediator.

This promise must be *kept alive* in the minds and hearts of a sinful race, and God used *four* great methods to ensure this result :

1. *Tradition*.—When, as yet, there were no written documents, oral tradition transmitted this representative promise from father to son, confirmed by every case of parental trust upon this divine assurance. The great age of the patriarchs enabled them by tradition to come into personal contact

with future centuries. There were but ten generations between Adam and Noah, and the extreme age to which Adam, for instance, attained enabled him to be the instructor of children and great-grandchildren to many generations.

Adam lived to see Lamech fifty-six years old, and to within one hundred and twenty-six years of Noah's birth! Seth survived to within fourteen years of Noah; and Methuselah lived to the very year of the Flood. Adam could therefore teach Lamech, and Lamech, Noah; and thus there were only two steps in tradition, between Creation and the Flood!

2. *Theophany, or divine manifestation in visible form.*—Jehovah, from time to time, appeared in person to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and other patriarchs. These theophanies mark another great stage in the transmission and development of the promise of redemption. Every theophany seems to have either expanded a previous promise or added something to it, or both, very notably in the case of Abraham. In all God's recorded appearances to the father of the faithful, each new manifestation was accompanied by a new stage of revelation. Thus Tradition and

Theophany served to supply the lack of recorded prophecy.

3. The great object-lesson of *the Tabernacle* marks a third stage, with its ritual, ceremonial, priesthood, vestments, and all that pertained to the sacrifices, fasts, and festivals. The description of this building, the only one that God ever designed (the Temple being but an enlarged and modified Tabernacle), fills more space in the Scriptures than any other single subject; in some cases occupying whole books. There must have been a divine reason in this, which is not far to seek. It was designed typically and pictorially to set forth the great leading truths of redemption, both as to the various aspects of the work of Christ, and of the believer's experience. This, again, helped to supply the lack of *documents*, which slowly accumulated from the time of Moses to that of Malachi.

4. *Historical and prophetical records*—the 'books,' so called, of the Old Testament—gradually gathering together, until they formed a great body of teaching, in part predictive, and in part preceptive, but all having a relation more or less direct to the unfolding of redemption.

II. THE FIRST GREAT STAGE IN FULFILMENT FOLLOWED. There were four or five hundred years of prophetic *silence*, between Malachi and Matthew. Then was reached in the advent of Christ the second great method by which the plan of redemption was to be expanded, *historically*, into its actual completeness. This was *the personal coming of the promised Seed of the woman*, the first great stage in the fulfilment of this primitive promise; and, strangely enough, He was peculiarly, and in a unique sense, the *woman's* Seed, born of the *woman*, but not begotten of the *man*. He was the God-Man—not God in man, nor man in God, but God and man mysteriously united, so that perfect humanity was inseparably wedded to perfect divinity. Four things, again, were peculiar to this new stage of development :

1. *The words of Christ*, who, as the last great prophet, was the full final mouthpiece for the declaration of the will of God (see Heb. i. 1, 2), and who “spake as never man spake,” even by the concession and confession of His enemies.

2. *The works of Christ*, such as man had never wrought—miraculous works covering the whole range of miracles, all forms of human disease, and

even death itself; embracing the animal and vegetable kingdoms, and the dominant forces of the whole material creation—showing that the whole universe of mind and matter was obviously under His complete control.

3. *The matchless life of Christ*, absolutely fulfilling the righteousness of the law, vindicating the moral government of God, and leaving us an example that we should follow His steps—who did no sin, and in whose mouth no guile was found: a life so beautiful that it has never since even been *approached* by the best of human lives, but stands apart by an immeasurable distance.

4. *His vicarious death on the cross*, vindicating a broken law, and expiating human sin on the principle of representation and substitution. The death of Christ, in the Word of God, *includes* His resurrection, as the proof that His death was effective as the remedy for human sin.

III. THE HOLY SPIRIT THE INTERPRETER. The next great step was *the bestowment of the Holy Spirit* on the day of Pentecost. This was not only another great step, but it was a *progress-*

ive step, needful to secure and crown all that had gone before. The advent of the Spirit was in effect the illumination and interpretation not only of all the records of prophecy, but of all the lessons of the Tabernacle. He confirmed all that was good, and corrected all that was false, in tradition, and interpreted the theophanies of the Old Testament, adding much additional light to all that had already been given, so that Pentecost became as the noonday in comparison to the dawn. It is the peculiarity of every great gift of God, that it includes all that has gone before, and adds something beside. So in the case of the Pentecostal Spirit: He was the Inspirer and Interpreter of the written Word, and He testified to and glorified the Christ.

IV. The fourth great method of developing the primitive promise was THE ORGANISATION OF THE CHURCH, AND ITS HISTORICAL CONDUCT UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF THE SPIRIT, as outlined in the Acts of the Apostles. This was a very important step and stage in the development of the plan of redemption, for it supplied a *body of experimental witnesses*, who, having believed and trusted, and having received the forgiveness of sins, and having

known the sealing and sanctifying power of the blood, the truth, and the Spirit, became God's living *witnesses* in the world and to the world, of the realities and possibilities of salvation. Thus it was proven that the plan was not a mere *plan*—a dream—vague, unsatisfactory, and ethereal—but something that could be reduced to actual, living practice, and prove itself to be all that God had promised.

Had not the Church decayed in piety, embracing errors of doctrine and of practice, and so resisting and grieving the Holy Spirit and quenching His light, this testimony might have continued in increasing power through all the subsequent ages. But though this form of *human* witness to God has suffered such degeneration, the grand divine testimony found in the Word, the Christ, and the Spirit, remains unimpaired and unimpeachable.

UNIQUE FEATURES OF CHRISTIANITY.

We now turn, in conclusion, to call attention to some of the unique features of the whole Christian system, which distinguish it not only as such, but differentiate it from all other so-called systems

of religious faith. These unique features also are mainly four : The Gospel represents God as—

1. *Seeking* men.
2. *Reconciling* men.
3. *Loving* men.
4. *Saving* men.

That is to say, all the steps in the salvation are taken by *God*, first of all. The utmost that man could do was to *respond* to divine approaches. No other religion has ever conceived of God as taking the *initial steps*. Instead of God seeking man, man has been taught to seek God, often very vaguely and ineffectually striving to placate an offended Deity by various offerings, sacrifices, self-denials, pilgrimages, and penances.

1. *The Gospel alone represents God as seeking man*, without any regard to man's moral condition or spiritual alienation ; and, in fact, as seeking man not when in his *best* condition, but when in his *worst* state of spiritual want and woe. "The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which is *lost*."

2. *God is represented as reconciling man to Himself*, and it is noticeable that, although in many of our hymns, and prayers, and addresses we

refer to God as *being* reconciled, the Bible never makes this statement. It rather represents God as never having been alienated. The alienation has been solely on the side of man. There has been no change in the attitude of God—the same God of holiness, and righteousness, love, compassion; man wandering from Him; but God yearning over man in all his wanderings, as illustrated in the latter part of Luke xv.—the story of the ‘Prodigal Son.’

This is a very important distinction, and derives its importance from the fact that it utterly delivers us from all thought of *having to do anything to bring God into a favourable attitude toward us—a reconciled position*. If He has never been alienated from man, then there is nothing for man to do but for him to turn toward God, and he will find God’s face already and always toward him.

3. *God is represented as loving man.* This is a new conception, not found in any heathen philosophy. Love is of two sorts—the love of *complacence*, which depends upon attractive qualities in the object; and the love of *benevolence*, which depends solely upon the

loving nature of him that loves, and has therefore no reference whatever to attractive qualities in the object, but is rather inspired to intenser activity by the determination to develop in the most unlovely that which shall prove to be lovable. God's love to man is not in consequence of man's virtues, but rather in spite of his vices, seeking to meet his awful destitution, and supply his desperate need. It is the love of One who, while He hates the *sin*, loves the *sinner*. This again is a wholly unique feature of the Christian system.

4. *God is represented as saving man*, not primarily with man's co-operation, but solely by His own blessed activity and grace. This is not a salvation that man secures by anything that he does. It is a *gift*, and all he can do is to accept what is a gift freely offered by God to all, irrespectively of their deserts, and as freely offered to the worst as to the best.

These are the four great unique features of the Christian system, but others almost as unique are the natural and necessary outcome and concomitants of these. For instance, what is called by Isaiah "ABUNDANT PARDON"—pardon so rich and free and

inexhaustible in its patience, that it is never weary of forgiving, and which demands nothing on the part of the recipient but penitence. "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon" (Isa. lv. 7). It is a pardon that not only forgives, but cancels the debt and destroys even its record, so that the sins and iniquities forgiven are remembered no more.

There is included also *justification without works*, a new doctrine, unknown to any other system. This justification is more than pardon. It implies absolute reinstatement in the favour of God, as though one had never sinned; and the marvel is not only that this justification is without works, but it is forfeited by all attempts to obtain it on the ground of personal merit.

SANCTIFICATION INCLUDED.

Sanctification also is included, and again without works. It is dependent upon nothing that the sinner does. He must simply entrust himself to

the Lord Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, and be content to have God in him meet and overcome foes with which he is unable to cope.

Scarcely less wonderful is it that all these divine mysteries, so profound and so unspeakable, are yet in practical application so *simple* that they are not beyond the reach of the humblest little child. All that are capable of sinning, that have enough intellect, and intelligence, and will to be responsible for action, are equally capable of faith ; so that, while the Bible is full of grandeur and ineffable sublimity, so that even the angels themselves vainly desire to look into and penetrate the mysteries of God, there are no mysteries in *duty*.

Salvation is thus put within the reach of every sinner. All this constrains us to exclaim, with the Apostle Paul: "For who hath known the mind of the Lord, or, being His counsellor, hath taught Him?" "For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things, to whom be glory for ever"—"*of Him*," as a source ; "*through Him*," as a channel ; "*to Him*," as the final ocean into which all empties. God is the beginning, the middle, and the end of the whole method of

salvation. There is no room either for human works or for human glory, no disputing or dividing the honour with God, no room for boasting. We can only glorify the infinite grace that saves.

THE BELIEVER'S LIFE

PART II

THE PRESENT TENSE

“But now, in Christ Jesus, ye . . . are made nigh by the blood of Christ.

“God . . . hath quickened us together with Christ, . . . and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.”—*Eph. ii. 13, 5, 6.*

THE BELIEVER'S LIFE

THE PRESENT TENSE

“But now in Christ Jesus”

THREE brief mottoes, taken from the Word of God, comprehensively cover the whole of this great subject—“Believe on Me”—“Abide in Me”—“Receive ye the Holy Ghost.” These, rightly understood, embrace the whole experience of the believer, from the time of his conversion to the period of his death, or entrance into the glory.

“BELIEVE ON ME” (John xiv. 1). Not simply “believe something *about* Me.” When you believe *on* a man you do more than believe *what he says*—much more. One may believe what a notoriously untruthful man says, because on that occasion he tells what is true; but to believe *on* a man is to *rest upon him*—as a wife believes on the husband she marries, as a son believes on the father whose

guidance and guardianship he trusts. That little word “on,” or “in,” has a great significance in this connection. To believe *on* Christ is to come into personal touch with Him, and rest upon Him ; to fling or cast yourself upon Him, as One who can bear you, as well as the burden of your sins.

Believing on Jesus Christ is *laying hold* ; and in order to lay hold on one thing you have to *let go* another. So, believing in Jesus, which is the positive side, really includes repentance, which is the negative side. You need not therefore trouble yourself about your repentance, or perplex yourself about your sorrow for sin, whether or not it is sufficient. If you have so far let go of sin as that you have laid hold on Jesus, it is very sure that you have repented. Any sorrow for sin suffices that leads to forsaking of evil and turning to God.

THE HORNS OF THE ALTAR.

If you want to know *what to lay hold on*, in the work of Jesus, it is all briefly stated in one verse—Rom. viii. 34, which I sometimes call the “Four Horns of the altar.” The horn always stands in the Bible for strength, and the horn of the altar was a sanctuary of refuge, as we see from

1 Kings i. 50–53 and ii. 28, 29; and the altar is acknowledged by God as such a place of refuge in Ex. xxi. 14.

Paul asks the question: “Who is he that condemneth?” How shall I escape condemnation? “It is Christ that *died*”—*first horn*; “yea, rather that is *risen again*”—*second horn*; “Who is even *at the right hand of God*”—*third horn*; “Who also *maketh intercession for us*”—*fourth horn*. And there is no need of more for Him to be or do, for here all our lifelong need is met.

If as a guilty sinner you are in danger of condemnation for your sin, lay hold on the first horn: “He died for me”; for in Him you died, and the law has nothing to do with a dead sinner. If, even when forgiven, you feel yourself yet in danger of condemnation, because by reason of the flesh you have not strength to walk with God, and live the new life, lay hold on the second horn. The power of the Risen Christ dwells in you and enables you for a holy walk with God: there is nothing impossible to him in whom the Holy Spirit dwells, and moves, and works. If you feel that you are still in danger from foes without—the world’s allurements and the devil’s assaults—remember He

is at the right hand of God, and lay hold on the third horn. All enemies are under His feet judicially, and all enemies will be under your feet, if you are seated there in Him. If, finally, you feel in danger of being drawn away, day by day, from vital contact with Him, not *holding fast* to Him on whom you have laid hold, thus losing power for holy living, and for giving your clear witness for the Lord, there is a fourth horn to lay hold on; remember that "He ever liveth to make intercession for you." The death of Christ, His resurrection, His session at the right hand of God, and His perpetual intercession, thus cover every possible need of every believing soul throughout his earthly pilgrimage.

THERE IS NOT ONLY AN EMBRACE OF CHRIST, BUT
AN ENTRANCE INTO CHRIST.

This is taught us by the second great motto of the Christian life, "*Abide in Me.*"

The expression "in Christ," with its equivalents, "in Him," "in whom," etc., is found more frequently in the New Testament than any other. You may write these two words over every Book of the New Testament, adding a third word to

characterise the special lesson of that particular Book, and these three words will serve to interpret every Epistle. Thus : Romans, justified in Christ ; Corinthians, sanctified in Christ ; Galatians, crucified in Christ ; Ephesians, ascended in Christ ; Philippians, satisfied in Christ ; Thessalonians, glorified in Christ ; and so, clear through to Jude, preserved in Christ. This expresses the believer's *entrance into Christ as the sphere of the new life*. To lay hold on Him is to embrace Him ; to abide in Christ is to *enter into Him*, so that He compasses and encloses you, and He is between you and everything else outside—all cares and perplexities, and dangers, and trials, and discontentments—so that you are absolutely secure and peaceful in Him.

In that same fifth chapter of Romans, we meet that new phrase “*in His life*.” The use of a new preposition here marks an era in revelation of the work of Christ. After presenting the thought that “being justified by believing *on* Him we have peace with God *through* Him, and being justified by His blood shall be *kept safe through Him* from wrath, we now advance (in ver. 10) to the second of Paul's ‘much mores’ — “much more, being

reconciled, we shall be *kept safe* **IN** *His life*.”¹ Here we meet this preposition “**IN**”—so pregnant with meaning. *The life of Christ is the new sphere of the believer*. The Parable of the Vine and Branches (John xv.) now has a new and luminous interpretation. And this new phrase “**IN CHRIST JESUS**” henceforth, as has been said, becomes the key to every Epistle in the New Testament. This is a sublime conception—the *believer ensphered in Christ*—so that He interposes between the weakest disciple and all destructive or disquieting influences; keeping him safe, not only from wrath, but from all the foes of his spiritual life—the world, the flesh, the devil, and, worst of all, *himself*.

In that *sphere*—Christ—there is an *atmosphere*. In that atmosphere you abide, and it abides in you; that atmosphere is the Holy Spirit. We call Him an atmosphere, not unmindful that He is a *Person*, but by an inadequate figure of speech to associate the relation the believer bears to Him with the relation he bears to the Lord Jesus. Of course, He is not literally a sphere, nor is the Holy Spirit an atmosphere; these are only metaphors.

The atmosphere is an *element*, and an element

¹ See Bishop Moule on *Romans*, *in loco*.

is something in which we are and which is also in us. The air is an element, because we are in it, and it is in us. So the Holy Spirit is a divine and personal element, because we are in Him, and He in us. Few illustrations drawn from nature are so perfect as this, to convey spiritual truth.

(1) One peculiarity of an element is that it is *infinite*. A finite being dwells in it, but the element is infinite. (2) It is *inexhaustible*. However much we draw upon it, abundance remains. (3) It is *independent* of us; we may die, but the element survives. (4) It is *indispensable* to us; we cannot live without it. (5) It is *inclusive*; it brings all benefits to each of those who dwell in it. (6) It is *indestructible*; it cannot be destroyed, but continually imparts its vitality. So the believer is to think of himself as in Christ, abiding, and breathing, and living upon the Holy Spirit, this Divine Person of the Trinity, as the source of all vitality, and energy, and strength. Says another thoughtful writer: "As to our safety in Christ"—our new sphere and atmosphere—"think of the protection of the atmosphere around the earth, to us who live on it; as in the case of shooting stars, which, entering

our atmosphere, are, by its resistance, made incandescent, and, thus vaporised, fall in harmless dust which doubtless fertilises our soil, more or less; whereas, if it were not for the atmosphere, we should soon be smashed with the showers or hail of meteors that we pass through! Indeed, God lets one pass through now and then, as He does at times permit great disasters, to show us from how much He is daily protecting us."

THE SPIRIT AND THE RESURRECTION LIFE.

The third motto of the new life is, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost." John xx. 22 suggests that the imparting of the Holy Spirit is not primarily and originally associated with Pentecost. The Pentecostal effusion was promised for power in witness (Luke xxiv. 47-49; Acts i. 8); but, on the very night of His *Resurrection*, He breathed on them, and said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost." That was a typical impartation of the Spirit, not for *witness*, but for *life*; and it came immediately upon the event of His Resurrection, because the inbreathing and indwelling of the Spirit of Life was to be dependent upon, and associated with,

that event in the New Testament (Rom. i. 4, viii. 11 ; Eph. i. 19, 20).

Hence that leading reference to the Spirit by a definite *name*, found in Rom. viii. 2, where He is, for the first and only time, called *the Spirit of Life*. In the Epistle to the Romans, as we have seen, He is always closely associated with the Resurrection of our Lord. Our identification with the Lord Jesus is indicated as begun at His *Crucifixion*; but our identification with the Holy Spirit dates from, and is dependent upon, His *Resurrection*. The reason is that, when the Spirit of Life came into the Lord Jesus, at His Resurrection, He also came into all believers typically and representatively.

In the first four chapters of Romans we have man's condemnation and guilt, God's righteousness and love, presented as the four necessities for the atonement. So far the emphasis is laid on the necessity of *believing in the name of the Lord Jesus* (Rom. iii. 22—iv. 25).

But from this point the new emphasis is put upon our entering into, and being kept ensphered in, His life. If we translate Rom. v. 8–10, as the Bishop of Durham renders it, to convey the full meaning,

it would read somewhat thus: "God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by His blood, we shall be *kept safe* from wrath through Him." It is not simply that we shall be *saved*—we *are* saved when we are justified—but we are kept in this state of security from wrath. But it is the next verse that marks this new stage in revelation: "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be *kept safe in His life*." This is the first time the expression "*in*" occurs in this Epistle in connection with the Lord Jesus Christ and the believer's indwelling in Him as the sphere of his own life. The apostle discards the preposition "through," which suggests a channel of conveyance, and uses "*in*"—which implies *ensphering*: the believer is henceforth enclosed in Him. He is, to the disciple,

NOT A CHANNEL ONLY, BUT THE BLESSING ITSELF.

He is not a means or medium for the reception of blessing, but He *is* Himself the blessing. Not

only, therefore, is the blessing in me, but I am in the blessing, because I am in the Blessor Himself.

No wonder we are declared to be “*kept safe in His life.*” The arrow cannot come to the eaglets, when under the wings of the mother eagle, without first piercing her own body. Nothing that is meant to destroy or damage the believer can reach him without passing through the Lord Himself.

To him who is in Jesus Christ all things work together for good. Even what Satan hurls at him as a fiery dart, if permitted to pass through this encircling Presence, changes its entire character. What you are trying to avoid may therefore be the greatest blessing. “In Christ” nothing can reach you that is going to hurt you. The great thing is to be sure that you are there, and that you abide there. The strategy of God is to get us there, and the strategy of the devil is to get us out.

When the Holy Spirit seeks fully to express this identification of a believing soul with the Lord, He does not trust to a circuitous phrase—a verb, preposition, and pronoun. He brings the believer and His Lord so near that there is not even a hyphen between. He uses compound words

which we cannot always translate into the English tongue. For instance, we died with Him ; we are buried with Him ; we are planted with Him ; we are quickened with Him ; we are raised with Him ; we are alive with Him ; we are seated with Him ; we are hid with Him in God ; we are manifested with Him ; we shall be brought with Him at His coming.

These great conceptions are expressed in the Greek by compound words. In a few cases even the rich original language does not furnish compound words, but compels the use of a phrase, as the English does ; but in the majority of cases there is a compound word, the preposition being inseparably linked with the verb so as better to express this close identification of the child of God with the Master. The English tongue has a few such words—‘co-work,’ ‘co-operate’ ; but we do not say co-crucify, co-die, and co-planted ; but that is what the Greek says. The disciple cannot be separated from the Lord Jesus. With Him he was crucified, with Him buried, with Him raised, with Him seated above, with Him he lives, with Him he shall come in glory, and with Him he shall reign and be glorified.

This identification of the believer with Christ

interprets, and in turn is interpreted by, His *Representative* character and career.

There are seven great facts in the Lord Jesus Christ's career as the Son of Man that are all representative—not for His sake, but for ours. (1) His Death, Burial, and Resurrection, which we group together. (2) His Inbreathing of the Spirit into the disciples. (3) His Forty Days of Walk in newness of life. (4) His Ascension to Heaven. (5) The “Joy that was set before Him,” in compensation for enduring the cross and despising the shame. (6) His Session at the right hand of God. (7) His Coming in glory.

THE DIVINE CARE OVER THE CÁNON OF SCRIPTURE.

There are seven Church Epistles, grouped in the New Testament between the Acts and the Pastoral Epistles (two Epistles being taken as one, when addressed to a single Church). These seven Church-letters *are not in the order of their composition*. First Thessalonians belongs first in the order of time, etc. The chronological order is mixed up, but *the logical order* is maintained. There is a steady and unbroken ‘*progress of doctrine*’

throughout! Who oversaw the preparation of the canon? Who thus overruled the controversies of the Church, and the doubts cast upon certain books, so that the order in which they were admitted into the New Testament is the logical order of thought, if it were not God? Yet observe that the order of arrangement precisely follows the order of the events we have outlined. (1) What does Romans treat of? Death, burial, and resurrection. (2) Corinthians? The reception of the Holy Ghost and His indwelling in the believer. (3) Galatians? The walk in the Spirit, so that we do not fulfil the lusts of the flesh. (4) Ephesians? The ascension to the right hand of God. (5) Philippians? The compensating joy that comes to the believer who, like his Lord, endures the cross and despises the shame. (6) Colossians? The session at the right hand of God. (7) Thessalonians? The coming of the Lord in glory. Chronology disregarded: development of doctrine sacredly guarded!

What is true as to the Lord Jesus Christ is true also as to the Holy Spirit. This sevenfold group of Epistles all treat of what the Holy Spirit is to the believer, and exactly in the logical order.

(1) How does Romans mainly present Him? The Spirit of Holiness must first be to us the Spirit of *Life*. First the believer must live in God. (2) Corinthians? The Spirit making the believer God's temple, so that the light and love of God shine in him and make him a new holy of holies (*vaos*). (3) Galatians? The Spirit enabling him to walk according to godliness. (4) Ephesians? The Spirit lifting to a heavenly level, and blessing with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies. (5) Philippians? Thus exalted to a heavenly level, the disciple is bound to be compensated abundantly for all he has ever suffered in the earthly sphere. (6) Colossians? By the Spirit he is filled with God in Christ, as Christ is Himself. (7) Thessalonians? The Spirit indwelling fits him finally to partake of the glory of Christ in His ultimate victory, and to be seated with Him on His throne.

Thus, as in Romans you are crucified with Jesus Christ, and buried with Him by baptism, into death, descending with Him to the depths, so you receive the same Spirit to bring you up from the death of trespasses and sins to the new life of God and the most exalted heights.

REFLECTING THE DIVINE ATTRIBUTES.

Of Corinthians the keynote is found in the First Epistle (vi. 17) : “ *He that is joined unto the Lord is one Spirit.*” That is the highest of all the sevenfold representations of unity between Christ and the believer. If the Holy Spirit comes into and joins my spirit, He is bound to make such an impression upon my personality that I shall begin to reflect, in my finite measure of capacity, the attributes of God. The mightier Spirit of God will mould the weaker spirit, so that it begins to reflect in its measure the characteristics of the Holy Spirit, as the Spirit of wisdom and knowledge, the Spirit of order, the Spirit of unselfishness, the Spirit of love, the Spirit of righteousness, the Spirit of holiness, the Spirit of patience.

In Galatians, we read that “the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh.” Think of this inspired writer ascribing *lusts* to the Spirit ! But what is a lust ? It is simply an inordinate and overmastering desire, something that subdues the man ; but fleshly lusts belong to the lower level of the baser, grosser desires, and they drag down the higher faculties, reason,

conscience, sensibilities, and will, and enslave the man. But the lusts of the Spirit overmaster the desires created by the flesh, so that the mightier affection may expel the lower. These spiritual 'lusts' belong to the highest level, and they draw up the man to his noblest possibilities, and instead of enslaving, they emancipate him. What are the lusts of the Spirit?—"love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." That is the way in which the Spirit enables you to live a holy life. Love puts hate under its feet; joy, gloom; peace, unrest; gentleness, impatience; and so through the whole catalogue of virtues. The Spirit puts into you something better, which enables you to subdue the lusts of the flesh. God can in you live a holy life; the trouble is that you have not got your grasp on His power. The lusts of the flesh master you because there is no higher, diviner desire to master the lower and baser. You must know what the Spirit's lusts are; then you will know how the fleshly lusts are subdued.

SATAN UNDER THE BELIEVER'S FEET.

In Ephesians the Spirit is lifting us to the *heavenly level*, altogether. Christ has left the world below and behind, and in Him all believers have done the same. He has left clouds and darkness behind, and we have done so too. The light which shines in the heavenly places shines in our souls. There we learn a new fact, that, as the Spirit in us subdues the *fleshly* lusts, so He also enables us to overcome the *world*, and even to hold the *devil* in check; and so in this Epistle, where we find the highest unfolding of heavenly privilege, we have at once the greatest revelation of Satanic malice and of the power of the believer who has put on the whole armour of God to stand against his wiles. But it is only in the heavenlies that the believer ever finds Satan under his feet, or is enabled to put on the whole armour of God. Here also he has his most terrific experience of Satanic assault. As long as we are kept enslaved by the lusts of the flesh, he lets us comparatively alone; but when by heavenly fellowship with Christ we make his kingdom tremble, then look out! It is when we give him trouble that he gives us trouble.

Let us not be surprised, then, if the highest reaches in a holy life are found only by a sorely exercised soul! If you are living a life that does not know anything about conflict, about tendencies to depression, about sore difficulties, about violent Satanic assault, it is to be feared that you have not got into the highest heavens. Yet, while we are sure thus to meet the devil in the heavenlies, blessed be God, in Christ even the weakest saint is fully panoplied, and strong to defy him and to put him to flight, and able to say, like his Master: "Get thee hence, Satan!"

The Lord Jesus came down and left everything behind for you and me. Shall we not mount upward, and leave everything behind for Him?

O sacred Head, once wounded,
With grief and shame weighed down,
Now scornfully surrounded
With thorns—Thine only crown!

O sacred Head, what glory,
What bliss till now was thine!
Yet though despised and gory,
I joy to call Thee mine!

THE BELIEVER'S LIFE

PART III

THE FUTURE TENSE

“That in the ages to come He might shew the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us, through Christ Jesus. . . .

“To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God.”—*Eph. ii. 7; iii. 10.*

THE BELIEVER'S LIFE

THE FUTURE TENSE

“In the Ages to Come”

THE study of this part of the subject includes, first, the state of the believer between Death and Resurrection ; and, second, after the Coming of the Lord. At both of these we must at least glance.

I. THE ‘INTERMEDIATE STATE.’

The important question arises, What is the state of souls between Death and Resurrection ?

In the Old Testament we have very few hints, for, in the former dispensation, the *temporal* was more emphasised than the *eternal*: the latter being reserved for the later day when Christ should bring ‘Life and Immortality to light,’ and illumine the whole question, by Himself passing through

Death and the grave and entering for a time into Hades, and then coming forth to die no more.

But the key to New Testament unfoldings is in Acts ii. 26–31, where Peter quotes and applies to Christ the mysterious words of David (Ps. xvi. 8–11).

Here the “flesh” is represented as “resting in hope” in the grave, while “the soul is in Hades,” but not “left” there, but again joined to the body, which, meanwhile, as God’s “Holy One,” has not “seen corruption.” Compare ver. 31 : “Neither was His soul (*ψυχή*) left in Hades, nor did His flesh (*σὰρξ αὐτοῦ*) see corruption.”

Thus interpreted, many things become plain. When we read of them which ‘sleep in Jesus,’ the reference is to the *body* (or *σὰρξ*); when we read of those who are ‘with Christ’ as holy dead, it is to the *soul* (or *ψυχή*).

Here, again, let us remember that, while no chain can hold more than its weakest link, a rope can sustain far more strain than any one of its single fibres; and our conclusions, on this subject, derive their strength not from solitary texts, which taken singly might not be conclusive, but from the combined testimony of many Scripture expressions. Of these we give simply a few examples.

Gen. ii. 7 : "The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of lives (Hebrew); and man became a living soul." Here is the fundamental conception—a body of earth—a spirit inbreathed of God.

To this Solomon obviously refers, in Eccles. xii. 7 : "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was; but the spirit shall return unto God who gave it." Here Death is the exact reverse of Creation, separating the body and spirit, joined at creation, each returning to its own. Compare Ps. cxlvi. 4.

Luke xxiii. 46 : "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit."

Acts vii. 59 : "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."

As to the *present living and conscious state of the dead*, consult such passages as the following :—

1 Sam. xxviii. 19 : "To-morrow thou and thy sons shall be with me."

Luke xxiii. 43 : "Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with Me in paradise."

Phil. i. 21, 23 : "To live is Christ, and to die is gain. . . . I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better."

2 Cor. v. 6–9 : “Knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord ; . . . willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.” (Note Greek used three times in this passage—*en-homed* and *ex-homed*.)

Matt. xvii. 3 ; Luke ix. 30 : “There appeared unto them Moses and Elias” (Moses having died and been buried, but equally and consciously alive with Elijah, who had been translated).

1 Pet. iii. 18–20. Whether this means that Christ in person visiting Hades there preached, or in the person of Noah by the Spirit preached before the Flood—the “spirits” are represented as “in prison” in Hades.

Rev. vi. 9, 11 : “I saw under the altar the souls of the slain,” etc.

Rev. xiv. 13 : “Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord—for they rest from their labours (vexatious toils); and their works (activities) accompany them” (literally), to their new abode.

Other passages confirm this view.

For example, Luke xx. 38. Christ replying to the Sadducees, who denied not only any resurrection, but any *existence of spirit apart from body* : “God is not a God of the dead, but of the living :

for all (even the dead, like Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob) live unto Him."

Heb. ix. 27, 28: "As it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this, judgment; so Christ was once offered to bear the sin of many: and a second time, apart from sin, shall He appear, to those awaiting Him, unto salvation."

The reference is to the disappearance of the High Priest on the Day of Atonement, after the Sacrifice at the altar—entering the veiled Holiest of All, with blood; and afterward reappearing in robes of glory and beauty—the people in the interval standing without, awaiting his reappearance.

Two events are plainly indicated as termini, with an interval between of expectation and anticipation.

The two events are Death and Christ's Coming: the interval, the intermediate state, both saints and sinners alike awaiting His Advent—the one for reward, the other for retribution and judgment.

With the believer Death is the end of mortal life, but the beginning of a truer life beyond. It is not destructive, but constructive. Nothing is lost. Whatever was worth anything here is retained and enlarged. Death is not the scuttling and sinking

of a richly-laden argosy in mid-ocean, but its arrival at port. Hope does not die—*Dum ex-spiro spero*. In fact, the New Testament banishes the word Death from its vocabulary after Christ's Resurrection, and other words take its place—sleep, departure, putting off this tabernacle, etc. Once, indeed, the word “die” occurs, of saints, but it is “die *in the Lord*.”

The interval is one both of expectation and anticipation of the full salvation which awaits the final Redemption. The disembodied Spirit is with Christ and other saints, blessed with the joys of Paradise and looking forward to the full and final manifestation of the Sons of God. When He is thus manifested, their life, now in hiding with Christ in God, shall be also—the spirit united with the body of glory, and together ushered into a perfect abode.

On the other hand, to the unbeliever Death is the end of human life, and destructive. All that is desirable in this world is left behind for ever. Hope dies—*Dum spiro spero*—and despair settles down upon the soul. The interval is again one of expectation and anticipation—but only of judgment. There is a foretaste of judgment as well as a fearful

looking for of fiery indignation—the accusation of conscience, the companionship of other lost souls and of evil spirits also awaiting judgment. Thus, beyond death is a second death, and beyond that no life. And at Christ's reappearing He shall "take vengeance on them that know not God," and retribution will be awfully complete.

Thus, in each case there is progress downward or upward. According as we have begun in this life, there is no essential change in character or condition; even judgment is begun in this life (Eph. vi. 8; Col. iii. 25). Whatever good or wrong any man doeth, that same shall he receive of the Lord, whether bond or free, and there is no respect of persons.

II. OUR LORD'S RETURN.

The Bible is a wonderful book, and in few respects more worthy of study than in the collocation or conjunction of certain things—the way in which different teachings are brought together in its pages. In the first chapter of the Acts of the Apostles (vers. 8, 11), with only two verses between, we have the *last* message of our Lord

before His ascension, and the *first* message after His ascension : “Ye shall receive the power of the Holy Ghost coming upon you ; and ye shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. And when He had spoken these things, while they beheld, He was taken up.” Then, in close conjunction with this last message of the ascending Lord, came the first message succeeding the ascension : “*This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come, in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven.*”

Do these two great messages stand there, thus linked together, by accident? What is the *great mission* of the Church in this whole gospel age? To bear witness to Him even to the uttermost parts of the earth. What is the *great coming event* toward which the whole Church and world and creation move? The world unconsciously, the Church half-consciously, and the inanimate creation unknowingly, all march on steadily toward one goal : the return of the Lord Jesus Christ from heaven to earth.

Two grand features characterise this Coming—

ITS IMMINENCE AND ITS EMINENCE.

1. *Its imminence.* Certainty as to the fact and uncertainty as to the time—these constitute imminence. Nothing is more certain than that Jesus Christ will return personally, will so come in like manner as He was seen to go into heaven. It was significant that as He was seen to go His hands were outstretched in benediction. When He comes they will still be outstretched in benediction as when He left, for He will come to complete His benediction, to bestow full blessings on His people. He will come visibly, personally, really—as He went; only that He went wearing the robes of humiliation, but He will come in robes of glory and beauty.

2. The *eminence* of this event is such that it overtops all events that ever took place from the foundation of the world. We have seen that one peculiarity about God's gifts is that every new one includes all that went before, and adds something beside. The written Word was a great gift; but when He gave His blessed Son, He gave in Him the Word that had been written, together with the Word that could not be written, but was incarnate

—the fulfilment of all that was in prophecy, and the example of all that was in precept, the *personal* blessing that had been anticipated in the *literal* blessing of the written Word. When God gave the Holy Spirit, He gave the Interpreter and Inspirer of the Word, and the Spirit that filled the Lord Jesus Christ and constituted Him what He was, the God-man, and who now testifies to Christ in such a way as to glorify Him, to make Him appear glorious in the eyes of men. So it was ‘expedient,’ actually *advantageous*—better that the Lord Jesus should depart, and the Spirit come, because through Him we know Him now “not after the flesh,” but through *spiritual* apprehension, which is far greater than to know Him by the bodily senses. “Henceforth know we Him no more after the flesh” (2 Cor. v. 16). The apostle does not lament this, but glories in the fact of such knowledge by the Spirit, as being greater than any possible through the flesh.

THE HISTORY OF REDEMPTION.

As every *gift* includes everything that went before and adds something, so every new great

event in the history of God's redeeming love crowns and overtops all that preceded. There are seven great stages in the history of redemption — 1. Creation ; 2. Incarnation ; 3. Transfiguration—the only occasion when Christ fully disclosed His glory ; 4. His Passion, including Gethsemane and the Cross ; 5. Resurrection, Ascension, Session, a compound event treated as one ; 6. Pentecost — the organisation of the Church as His body, and the filling of that mystical body with the Spirit who was the vital breath of His literal body. Only one great event is to follow—7. the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, with all that it involves. This last and crowning event completes and includes all the others.

1. It is the *New Creation*. All that is worth anything in the old creation is reproduced in the new—the paradise of God, the river of the water of life, the tree of life, the tabernacle of God with men ; but, in addition, there shall be no more curse, such as fell on the original Eden.

2. As to the *Incarnation*, the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ is the bringing down of God to abide in man permanently, as though the

whole body of the redeemed became a sort of incarnation of God—a body of redeemed humanity, indwelt by divinity.

3. It is the *Transfiguration* of the whole Church, even the bodies of saints being changed from bodies of humiliation into the likeness of His glorious body as seen on the Mount of Transfiguration. Disciples will then shine as the sun, for holy thoughts and emotions will then irradiate, with their glory, the bodies and even the celestial raiment of the saints.

CRUCIFIXION OF THE SELF-LIFE.

4. The Lord's coming will crown and fulfil His *Passion* in His Church's perfection. What was the central thought of Christ's Passion but the crucifixion of the self-life, His will given up to the will of the Father, and His own life freely sacrificed for the salvation of men? What is the Second Coming of Christ but the entire and final death of the self-life to His whole body, with the merging of the will of all God's children into His will? "Thy name be hallowed. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done." We should not dis-

connect the following phrase from all the three preceding petitions : it belongs equally to all and not to the last only. It qualifies them all. "As in heaven, so on earth, Thy name be hallowed, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done"; Thy name universally hallowed, Thy kingdom universally regnant, Thy will universally done.

5. As to His *Resurrection*, what is the Second Coming of Jesus Christ but the absolute blossoming out into *resurrection life* of the whole body of the redeemed, who shall die no more, and who shall sit with Christ on His throne?

6. So, as to *Pentecost*, the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ will be the absolute possession by the whole body of the *Holy Spirit*, in absolute and unrestricted fulness.

Thus the Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ takes in all that preceded, crowns all, fulfils all, brings all typical suggestions to absolute and complete realisation.

As already intimated, this last event in the series adds something peculiarly its own. In God's Word, the Second Advent introduces, apart from the fulfilment of these typical forecasts, at least *Ten great developments*, which we

indicate, without attempting to fix their chronological order and sequence :

1. First Resurrection—of the elect dead. 1 Cor. xv. 23 ; 1 Thess. iv. 15–18 ; Rev. xx. 4–6.

2. Destruction of Man of Sin — Antichrist. 2 Thess. ii. 7–10 ; Dan. vii. 10, 11.

3. Conversion of Jewish nation. Rom. xi. 25–32 ; Isa. lix. 20.

4. Setting up of Messiah's kingdom, and Fall of Babylon. Dan. ii. 34, 35 ; Rev. xix. 11–16.

5. Judgment-seat of Christ, and awards to saints. 1 Cor. iii. 13–15, iv. 5 ; 2 Cor. v. 10.

6. Millennial reign of Christ with the saints. Rev. xx. 4 ; Dan. vii. 9, 22, 27.

7. General Resurrection and Last Judgment. John v. 28, 29 ; Rev. xx. 11–15.

8. Destruction of the Devil, Death, and Hades. 1 Cor. xv. 26 ; Rev. xx. 10, 14, 15.

9. Consummation of Redemption, and perfection of saints. 1 Pet. i. 3–7 ; Jude 24, 25.

10. THE END—Delivering up the kingdom to God, the Father. 1 Cor. xv. 24.

NEARNESS OF THE SECOND ADVENT.

The Second Coming of our Lord, which is thus an *eminent* event, is always *imminent*, and may be very much nearer than most of us think. Some of the most devout students of Scripture have said that it would not at all be surprising if some saints, now living, should never pass through the experience of death, but be alive and remain at His coming. There are about twenty different lines of computation, based on scriptural hints, all of which—as many close students of prophecy think—converge between the years 1910 and 1940.

When Daniel by the books understood that the years were drawing nigh when the captivity should end, he began fasting and praying before God, and had a revelation which he did not expect, of how a greater period of four hundred and ninety years—seventy times seven—lay ahead; and how, within that period, lay two great events, so significant that they include the whole history of redemption. Four hundred and eighty-three years of this four hundred and ninety were specially separated from the rest, as marking the time of the first advent; and, to a day, as Sir Robert Anderson

has shown in his book, *Daniel in the Critics' Den*, when the four hundred and eighty-three years had expired, Christ rode into Jerusalem, the only time when He was ever saluted as Prince of the house of David.

Seven years remain beyond that four hundred and eighty-three, and in the inspired record all history stops until these final events, that are the consummation of both prophecy and history, become real. Do not tell me that the Bible is not the Word of God. In everything it is unique and sublime. God has His own mathematics, His own lexicon, His own calendar, His own terminology, His own ways of reckoning time, His own methods of making history. He drops out whole years when His people are not in faithful relations to Him, and does not count them in His prophetic periods. He drops out centuries because they have nothing special to do with the onward progress of His elect kingdom: that is to say, they are *Gentile Times*: they are not concerned with the history of *Israel*, which is the nucleus of the history of the *kingdom*.

NOT A CIRCLE, BUT AN ELLIPSE.

With regard to the eminence of this event, the Lord's Coming, we often mistakenly talk of Christianity as a *circle* whose one *centre* is the Incarnation—a misleading conception. Christianity is rather an *ellipse*, with *two foci*, and these focal centres are the Incarnation and the Second Coming—the two Advents. Every part and point in this great circumference of Christianity and redemption has thus a co-ordinate relation to both of these two events. Between the creation and the first of these *foci* there is one object, an altar, pointing backward to the Fall and forward to the first coming of the Lord. Between the two *foci* there is one object, the Lord's Table, pointing back to His death and forward to His Second Coming. Between the Second Coming and the End there is one object, a throne, looking back to its erection at His Second Advent and forward to the merging of the throne of the Son into the throne of the Father. What a shame to a Christian disciple to know practically nothing about the Second Coming! to treat it with scornful contempt, or even with indifference! Not to understand the relation of

such events as these to the great all-inclusive circumference of redemption !

Spirit, soul, body—all are, at His Advent, to be brought into conditions of *perfection*. But Heavenly Perfection is something surpassing all our present experiences and conceptions. Perfection in this life, and in the earthly sphere, always means, in the New Testament, *correspondence to a pattern set before us*. The relative perfection of Christian character is therefore correspondence to the pattern of Christian character : the perfection of benevolence is conformity to the disinterested Love of God. But the perfection of *heaven* is more than this : it is actual *approximation to God's own perfection in ever-increasing resemblance*. However a disciple might be filled with God to-day, his *capacity* is so small that he can take in but little ; but the capacity which is now like that of a little flower that overflows with a single dewdrop, shall eternally increase until it becomes like an ocean. Growth does not stop when the Lord comes, and the believer is clothed with the resurrection body : growth will never stop. The redeemed and glorified saint will increase in capacity until what he knows of God

will be infinitely greater than now, his power to understand and comprehend Him being perpetually expanding and enlarging. How true it is, that “ we know not what we shall be ! ”

“ THE RESTITUTION OF ALL THINGS.”

In Acts iii. 20, 21, there is another hint of what the Lord's Coming means as the pre-eminent event of Redemption history. “ Restitution ” is a word, used only in this place, and scarcely translatable. It means *full re-establishment*, and includes *all* things spoken by *all* the prophets through *all* the ages of human history. It thus represents the *absolute consummation of all things* contemplated in the Redemptive plan of God.

In Romans v. 9–20, the phrase “ *much more* ” occurs five times (in vers. 9, 10, 15, 17, 20), and there may be observed a regular progress of truth in the use of this phrase : 1. We are now *justified*, but “ much more,” we are *kept safe from condemnation*. 2. We are now *reconciled*, but “ much more,” we are *kept from alienation and made sons*. 3. We are not only *saved*, but “ much more,” *grace abounds* in our salvation; so that

not only are all sins of the deliberate offender forgiven, but the sinful nature of those who died before they had sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, is cleansed in the blood of Christ, so that those who are physically, mentally, or morally irresponsible pass into heaven fitted for its joys. Grace is often called an attribute of God, but His attributes are the necessary, inherent characteristics of His nature. Grace is not therefore an *attribute*. God is bound to be truthful, righteous, just, holy, but He is not bound to be *gracious*. Grace is therefore a voluntary exercise of the attribute of love, and that is the point on which *this* third "much more" turns—that God has not dealt with us simply in truth, or justice, but He has been gracious—what no attribute of His nature *compelled* Him to be. If it were *debt*, it would be no more *grace*. 4. The next "much more" turns on this, that the abundance of that grace confers not only deliverance from death, but reigning in life—eternal life.

5. The last "much more" is all-inclusive. Sin reigned over us unto death, but we are in Christ to reign over sin and over death. We are not only forgiven, and cleansed, and reconciled, and

put into God's family, but "much more," we are made sons and heirs, and more than heirs, co-sovereigns with Jesus Christ. This "crown of glory" we cannot understand till He comes. This final "much more," which is greater than all the others, suggests that you and I, who were slaves of sin, have not only been lifted up out of the horrible pit and miry clay, and had our feet set upon the rock; but that our hearts have been so cleansed that we have been made partakers of the divine image; and, by the grace of God, we shall mount to a heavenly height, and sit down with Jesus Christ upon His throne, as He overcame, and is set down with His Father on His throne.

JACOB'S LADDER.

Here is the true Jacob's Ladder, reaching from earth to heaven. Christ came down that ladder from heaven to earth to bring God down to man; and in Christ redeemed man goes up on that ladder from earth to heaven—and thus man is brought up to God!

There are four levels in the first two chapters of the Epistle to the Hebrews—(1) the level of God; (2) the level of angels; (3) the level of man; and

(4) the level of demons. Man was originally on the terrestrial level, and was made to have dominion over all that is on the earth. Satan came up from the infernal level, and dragged man down to his own level. But in Christ redeemed humanity rises

FROM THE LOWEST LEVEL TO THE HIGHEST.

The problem in the divine mind was *how to redeem man*. The race had *fallen* in its first representative. Could it *rise* in another? If any *other and sinless man* had been permitted to undertake the work Adam had failed in, he might have been overtaken by similar temptation. If an *angel* had been permitted to become man, and so identify himself with the human race, Satan might have successfully tempted this angelic man, and the race have been worse off than ever. There was only *one being* who could solve the problem. The Son of God condescended to become the Second Man for the sake of contesting the sovereignty of the world with Satan ; and so, overcoming Satan in our behalf and as our representative, and regaining man's lost sovereignty over creation, make us to share His sceptre.

But the triumph of the God-man brings to us *much more* than man lost in the fall. If a man could have redeemed men, all he could have done would have been to lift them to his own terrestrial level. If an angel could have redeemed men, all he could have done would have been to lift them to an angelic level. But, so far as the Son of God became wedded to man, man became wedded to the Son of God, and so identity was established; and when He went back to His own level He inevitably lifted redeemed humanity with Him, not only from the infernal and terrestrial levels, but past the angelic, up to His own—*the divine*.

This is found fully brought out only in these two opening chapters in Hebrews. In the first chapter are the seven marks of His divinity, and in the second, the seven marks of His humanity. He so closely united Himself with humanity that humanity must be equally united to Him. So, as He became the ladder for God to come down to men, He also became the ladder for men to go up to God. This is the great MUCH MORE—the wonderful ‘mystery’ of surpassing, infinite, eternal grace, that never can be fully understood, even when we enter into the fulness of final blessing.

“THE BLESSED HOPE.”

Death is not the objective point of the Christian, but the Lord's coming. Our hymns do not touch always a high level—

“Fight on, my soul, till *death*
Shall bring thee to thy God.”

The blessed hope is that we shall yet see *Jesus in the flesh, and never die*. Death, put it the best way you will, is the *curse, the enemy*.

“The last enemy, death, shall be destroyed.”

Death is the *penalty* of sin. Other penalties are removed, abolished, in Christ's Death and Resurrection; but this remains, until the whole creation that groans and travails, together with man, enters, with him, into its redeemed state (Rom. viii. 19-23). We must therefore—as to the abolition of death—wait for this consummation; and “what manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God!” Think of the lives we are living! think of the lack of holy witness! think of the prayerlessness and neglect of the Christless world! Think of all these and other inconsistencies, and how they witness against us before God and before men!

After all that God has revealed about the Future of the believer, there still remains a vast realm of unexplored and inscrutable mystery. But even the mystery is uplifting, for it is the mystery of glory, indescribable and unutterable. There every doubt, difficulty, and perplexity will be solved. As Dr. Holmes used to say, an abridged history of two worlds may be found in a thin partition line, with an interrogation point below and an exclamation point above.

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?

The thinnest possible dividing line between. Questionings below, answers above; here doubts, there certainties.

Our future is God's present. He "declares the end from the beginning." He is Jehovah, and Jehovah embraces the three tenses of the verb "to be"—I am, I was, I shall be. The great name announced to Moses was "I am." One of the great proofs of our Lord's divinity was that He used the divine "I am"—"Before Abraham was, *I am.*" What does this imply? That God sees you to-day not as you *are* now, but as you *will be*. There may be a cripple

who is suffering all the effects of the criminal practices and debauched lives of parents, but who is a child of God. There is to our eyes nothing beautiful in his appearance, but, as God looks on him, He sees him already beautiful, transfigured, wearing garments of glory and beauty, just as we shall see him in the infinite future, with capacities to understand God infinitely greater than the greatest capacity of the greatest living saint to-day. Do not you see how sure this fact that our future is God's present already makes that future? It is even now with Him an accomplished fact. We struggle and stumble, but He sees us [past the struggling and stumbling, with all the infirmities and inconsistencies left behind and the waves and the storms under our feet.

BETTER THAN BEING AN ANGEL.

He sees us in the eternal glory, nearer to Him than the angels. No angel can say, "I am a son of God; by grace I am a member of the Lord Jesus Christ, of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones." The angels stand

round about the saints. I do not “want to be an angel.” It is better to be a saint. God has a greater future for saints, and even the angels only minister to them, and may envy them the glory and grandeur of that future.

Our Lord Jesus Christ, likewise, already sees *His* future, as present; He therefore already “sees of the travail of His soul and is satisfied.” There is no uncertainty in regard to the future of the salvation He wrought out for us, or of the final prevalence of His kingdom. All this means that we should live in the daily expectation of our “future tense”—of His Return—with a daily looking up, not down—forward, not backward—outward, not inward; seeking His glory and devoting ourselves to the bringing of this fallen world to His pierced feet, that multitudes more may leave the awful gloom and darkness of the *past*, for the peace and joy of the *present*, and the exaltation and glory of the *future*!

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I.

Jesus, what love and compassion were Thine,
When Thou didst heavenly glory resign,
Bearing the cross for the guilt that was mine,
Purchasing Pardon and Sonship for me!

Chorus.

Crucified, glorified Saviour and King,
How shall I sing praises to Thee?
Since by Thy blood Thou hast brought me to God,
I will give glory, all glory to Thee.

II.

Once I was helpless and dead in my sin,
But Thou didst in me a new life begin,
Breathing Thine own Holy Spirit within,
Hallowing God's holy temple in me!

Chorus.

III.

When, amid darkness and death of the race,
Thou wouldst send heralds to publish Thy grace,
Passing by angels, Thou didst in their place
Call to this service a sinner like me!

Chorus.

IV.

When all temptations and trials are past,
And in Thy likeness I stand, at the last,
Down at Thy feet, Lord, my crown I will cast:
All is of grace—there's no glory to me!

Chorus.

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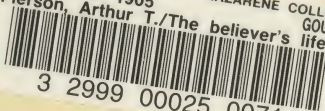
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